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**Paradise and the Periphery:
the New Bloomusalem and Bloom Cottage**

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‘Encyclopedia Joyce’
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In the history of the making of *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom's "Messianic scene" in "Circe," in which he hallucinates the founding of "the new Bloomusalem in the Nova Hibernia of the future" (*U* 15.1541-3), is a significant anomaly. Although Joyce added plenty of important material to episodes after their initial publication in the *Little Review*, particularly once Maurice Darantière had begun to pull placards and page proofs in the summer of 1921, his additions tended to be at the level of sentences and fragments.¹ The "Messianic scene," which was an entirely contiguous addition, was added that same summer.² Indeed, its 603 lines make up a full narrative arc that is strikingly discrete, especially by the phantasmic standards of "Circe." The scene is by far the longest singular addition Joyce made to a full draft of any of the novel's episodes.³ Of course, as Michael Groden's account makes clear, the majority of Joyce's additions did not occur at any great remove from the text: the "expansion and elaboration" of earlier episodes happened during the "last stage" of the novel's progress, as he completed his first drafts of the final four episodes directly for publication. Since he wrote the final episodes in pairs—"Circe" with "Eumaeus" and then "Ithaca" with "Penelope"—it follows that additions made to "Circe" took place as he worked on "Ithaca" and "Penelope."⁴ As such, this essay takes as its opening gambit the idea that something about the writing of "Ithaca" and "Penelope" required the anomalous addition of the "Messianic scene." By reading the scene in terms of its genesis alongside the novel's final two episodes, two particular moments provide suggestive echoes: firstly, and most extensively, Bloom's fantasy of founding Bloom Cottage in "Ithaca," and, secondly, Molly's thoughts on whether she would take another husband in "Penelope." In the former, Joyce lays out a critique of the relationship between encyclopedic thought and the totalizing imagination in terms of epistemology and power; in the latter, he uses that critique to begin thinking through the ways the

fictional imagination enables a form of encyclopedism that does not totalize its subject. While Joyce creates in the “Messianic scene” and “Ithaca” a center-margin, or paradise-periphery, dyad, by which the proscriptions of contemporaneous encyclopedic thought can be critiqued, he uses “Penelope” to disrupt the gendered assumptions built into that same dyad, and asserts the capacity of fiction to imagine a world without totality.

The Making of the “Messianic Scene”: from Bloom Cottage to the New Bloomusalem

Even in Joyce’s first recorded mention of the “Messianic scene,” a letter to Valéry Larbaud that Groden dates at approximately 11 August 1921, it is clear that something about “Ithaca” and “Penelope” has necessitated it: “Outre ça...j’ai ajouté à ‘Circe’ une scène messianique avec un litanie chantée en son honneur...‘Ithaque’ est très étrange. ‘Pénélope’ le dernier cri” (*Letters I*, 169). The mention of the final two episodes is especially conspicuous given that, only a little earlier, on 7 August 1921, Joyce advised Harriet Shaw Weaver that he “had the greater part of ‘Ithaca’” and suggests that the writing of “Penelope” is on track—and that “Bloom and all the Blooms will soon be dead” (*Letters I*, 168). What, then, is the relationship between the “Messianic scene” and these two episodes? While “Penelope” offers an oblique answer that I will come to at the end of this essay, “Ithaca” offers a very direct one—one that is hinted at in Joyce’s phrase “all the Blooms.” The phrase, of course, has a double meaning: it is not just the Bloom family and its ghosts who will end with *Ulysses*, but all the different versions of Leopold Bloom himself—from Poldy to Henry Flower to L. Boom, and so on.⁵ It is revealing, then, that the “Messianic scene” and “Ithaca” imagine two very specific types of Bloom—Blooms idealized in their achievement of a kind of maximum agency: “Leopold the First,” the new Bloomusalem’s “the emperor-president and king-chairman,” and “Bloom of Flowerville,” who lives in “Bloom Cottage,” (*U* 15.1471-3, 1544; 17.1580-1). These two Blooms are, for all their

differences, of a piece—mutually reinforcing riffs on the same epistemological tune—and by reading the two scenes against the grain of the novel, in the order suggested by their implied genesis, their similarities and divergences present themselves readily.

Bloom Cottage is, of course, Bloom's "ultimate ambition" (*U* 17.1497): a fantasy of an ideal home that doubles, in the context of "Ithaca," as an ideal homecoming in ironic distinction to his bathetic return to 7 Eccles Street. The cottage itself is a "thatched bungalowshaped 2 storey dwellinghouse...not less than 1 statute mile from the periphery of the metropolis" that Bloom is "Not to inherit...but to purchase"; and Bloom of Flowerville is "foresee[n]" in "loose allwool garments with Harris tweed cap" with "civic functions and social status among the county families and landed gentry" (*U* 17.1499-1515, 1581-2, 1606-7). The reverie works as a fantasy of the maximum potential of meritocratic endeavor within contemporaneous British society, which leads, naturally and logically, to a position among the British ruling class that has not just been earned, but which is exemplary—to the point of Bloom himself being appointed "resident magistrate or justice of the peace with a family crest and coat of arms and appropriate classical motto" (*U* 17.1610-1). Implicit in the aspirational logic of the scene is a re-statement of the alienation that pervades the representation of Bloom's life in "Ithaca": Bloom's ideal home, and fantasy homecoming, is a home not for him, but for an idealized, and non-existent, version of himself that is contingent on achieving full potential within a meritocratic system. It is as if only "Bloom, Leopold P., M.P., P.C., K.P., L.L.D. (*honoris causa*)" (*U* 17.1612-3) could exist in Bloom Cottage and become Bloom of Flowerville. It is revealing that Bloom justifies the fantasy, a scheme "difficult of realization," as efficacious preparation for the following day:

It was one of his axioms that similar meditations or the automatic relation to himself of a narrative concerning himself or tranquil recollection of the past when practised habitually before retiring for the night alleviated fatigue and produced as a result sound repose and renovated vitality. (*U* 17.1753, 1754-58)

Bloom tacitly acknowledges that the fantasy is less about a set of achievable desires than a pragmatic sublimation of desires—as if a vision of bourgeois aspiration fulfilled is the best preparation for another day of radical potential unachieved.

In this, the relationship between Bloom of 7 Eccles Street and Bloom of Flowerville begins to look like an early example of what Lauren Berlant has theorized as “cruel optimism,” with the fantasy of aspiration achieved working to impede Bloom’s own flourishing through the limitations it places on him.⁶ Indeed, although Bloom accepts that the fantasy would require the “independent discovery of a goldseam of inexhaustible ore” (*U* 17.1753), he seems content to imagine in detail the various limits to which Bloom of Flowerville would be subject—as, for example, when, in one of the episode’s only imperatives, he is required to demonstrate that he is worthy of the fantasy by demonstrating that “he had loved rectitude from earliest youth” (*U* 17.1634). Bloom’s proof is revealing: he recalls that he had “advocated during nocturnal perambulations the political theory of colonial (e.g. Canadian) expansion,” recounts the move of him and his father from “the Israelitic faith” to “the Irish (protestant) church” and then “Roman Catholicism,” and his support for the “constitutional agitation of Charles Stewart Parnell” and the “programme of peace, retrenchment and reform of William Ewart Gladstone” (*U* 17.1642-3, 1636-40, 1649-51). What is important about this definition of “rectitude” is that, although it may not be internally coherent, each element presupposes one fundamental demand of Bloom: that he profess loyalty and deference to the contemporaneous status quo—that is, to the way things are in fin-de-siècle British-occupied Dublin, rather than the way they could be. The extent of this “rectitude” seems strikingly out of character with the identity of the Bloom we come to know over the novel—that is, the “cultured allroundman” who campaigned against the Boer War and Joe Chamberlain, is known to the Castle, and asserts, how ever tentatively, that it is possible for one’s race and nation to be different (*U* 10.581; 8.419-30; 12.1636-7, 1422-68). Although the fantasy’s hobbyhorsical proliferation of details may make Bloom of Flowerville seem like a paradise of personal

achievement, the appearance of maximum agency can easily disguise the fact that the fantasy is fundamentally one of loyalty and deference to powers over which Bloom has no say or influence. What makes Bloom's agency in the fantasy so maximal is less his own achievements than that he is completely commensurable with those distant powers—indeed the idealness of Bloom of Flowerville is contingent, like his career among the “county families and landed gentry,” on his ability to fit within “hierarchical order” (*U* 17.1608).

Little surprise, then, that his “course of action” as Bloom of Flowerville, in his capacity as a judge, would be one “that lay between undue clemency and excessive rigour: the dispensation in a heterogeneous society of arbitrary classes...of unbiassed homogeneous indisputable justice...Loyal to the highest constituted power in the land” (*U* 17.1616-20). If Bloom of Flowerville is Bloom of 7 Eccles Street's “ultimate ambition,” it is an ambition that requires “the strict maintenance of public order” by universalizing “rectitude” across heterogeneous society (*U* 17.1622-4). Within this “order,” to which he must demonstrate loyalty and deference, Bloom of Flowerville remains peripheral: even at “the zenith of his career,” “fashionable intelligence” parenthetically notes that “(Mr and Mrs Leopold Bloom have left Kingstown for England),” as if to suggest that the version of Bloom that would fit in Bloom Cottage would always be marginal—and, tragicomically, that the maximum agency he could exercise would be to leave the colonized periphery for the Imperial center (*U* 17.1609-15).

If Bloom of Flowerville is Bloom of 7 Eccles Street's fantasy of his maximum potential were he “Loyal to the highest constituted power in the land,” Leopold the First of the new Bloomusalem looks fundamentally like a vision of his maximum potential were he to *be* that “highest constituted power in the land.” Although the fantasy is implicitly occasioned by Bloom's memory of the Citizen's jibe about the “new Jerusalem” earlier in the day, and alludes to the scene severally,⁷ it is not solely a fantasy of vengeance or vindication (*U* 12.1473; 15.1616-18, 1932-3). Rather, the scene is a vision of Bloom's agency were he to be raised to the position of absolute centrality within the universal order

of things, and become as such the determining principle of reality. Indeed, it is not just that in the name “new Bloomusalem” and the proclamation of a new “Paradisiacal Era,” “Ireland and territories thereunto belonging” are redefined in the image of Leopold the First and according to his private desires—it is that Leopold the First and his desires become the literal center of the universe (*U* 15.1544, 1632, 1481-2). As well as embodying all of society’s most important leadership roles,⁸ Leopold the First’s apparently universal kingdom is structured around his presence, as he commands, from his “mantle of cloth of gold,” “Immediate silence” with his right hand, and “Wireless intercontinental and interplanetary transmitters are set for reception of message” (*U* 17.1490, 1500-2). It is as if the feature that defines Leopold the First’s centrality as ideal as such is his absolute epistemic power over all that adds up to make not just Irish reality but the *totality* of reality—over all the parts of reality that aggregate, or are totalized, into its whole—and it is in this that Leopold the First is the binary opposite of Bloom of Flowerville. While the new Bloomusalem is the fantasy of a central space from which reality can be totalized in line with Bloom’s own desires, Bloom Cottage is a marginal zone channeling the order determined by and from the distant, totalizing, Imperial center: just as Leopold the First restructures his “beloved subjects” into a totality in relation to his sovereignty, with the new Bloomusalem’s construction seeing “Numerous houses razed to the ground” and “inhabitants...lodged in barrels and boxes, all marked in red with the letters: L.B.,” Bloom of Flowerville is “duly recorded in the court directory” of a totality in which he has no say (*U* 15.1542-55; 17.1611-2). The former is a vision of the ideal Bloom as one whose maximum potential is epistemological centrality, the latter as one whose maximum potential is achieved as the peripheral subject of the epistemology of a distant center—one a paradisiacal Bloom, the other a peripheral Bloom.

As Richard E. Madtes has noted, in his work on the “building” of “Ithaca,” there are traces of Bloom Cottage clear in Joyce’s earliest notes for the episode—specifically in lists of concrete nouns,

like “sectional bookcase” (*U* 17.1523), that end up populating the cottage.⁹ Since Joyce added Bloom’s “Messianic scene” in the summer of 1921, we can infer with some confidence that Joyce’s vision of Bloom’s fantasy of epistemic paradise was conceived only *after* he had begun to flesh out Bloom’s fantasy of maximum potential at the epistemic periphery. But this genetic quirk in *Ulysses*’ making in a sense only signposts parallels between Bloom Cottage and the New Bloomusalem that Joyce is at pains to make clear in the text: just as Bloom Cottage is a building, the New Bloomusalem is “a colossal edifice with crystal roof, built in the shape of a huge pork kidney, containing forty thousand rooms”; just as Bloom of Flowerville has judicial responsibilities, Leopold the First opens his “Court of Conscience” to provide “solution to doubles and other problems”; moreover, just as the absence of any trace of Molly in Bloom Cottage indicates the fraught extent of Bloom of Flowerville’s relationship to women, Leopold the First is imagined as having “repudiated” the “former morganatic spouse” in favor of Selene, Greek goddess of the moon (*U* 15.1548-9, 1629-30, 1505-8). Through these convergences, the two scenes set themselves up as a dyad. How do we read the fact that Joyce decided to complement Bloom’s fantasy of aspiration achieved as the peripheral subject of an epistemology defined by a distant center with a fantasy of becoming that epistemic center? What connects these two scenes beyond their parallel motifs?

The Locus of Enunciation and the Encyclopedic Imagination: from the New Bloomusalem to Bloom Cottage

Of course, if the key difference between the scenes is that they imagine Bloom in contrasting epistemological positions—central and marginal—then there is a presupposition they share about the relationship between epistemology and reality: that is to say, both scenes depend on the idea that reality is constructed as a totality from a central, dominant point. The epistemic center, as such,

assumes responsibility for totalizing reality—making of it a unified, homogenized, knowable, and articulable singularity. Both the new Bloomusalem and Bloom Cottage presuppose realities that are totalized—consistent and coherent from the center to the margin. Bloom’s position in relation to that center is the determining variable of each scene, with Leopold the First embodying the center and Bloom of Flowerville being “Loyal” to its distant manifestation. In the scenes’ shared conception of reality as totalizable from a central space, Joyce’s critique of the encyclopedic imagination begins to emerge: for if the aim of encyclopedic thought is to conceive in language a total picture of the world and its learning, then it follows that encyclopedic thought also presupposes an idea of reality as a totality that can be constructed and articulated from an epistemological center—an epistemological center that it assumes to occupy.¹⁰

In this, decolonial theorist Walter D. Mignolo provides a useful term for theorizing the implications of epistemological centrality: the “locus of enunciation.”¹¹ Mignolo uses the term throughout his work as a shorthand for referring to the space from which the right to classify and set the standards for classification are assumed; indeed, for him, shifting attention away from the enunciated and onto the enunciation and the conditions that make it possible helps to identify and characterize the kinds of assumptions that the epistemic center is making and on which it depends. In Mignolo’s historiographic work on the development of encyclopedic paradigms during the Renaissance, drawing this distinction between enunciated and enunciation is key: for if it is from the locus of enunciation that categories for knowledge are set, then it follows that the locus of enunciation determines what is and is not registered as “real” knowledge—and, in the context of totalizing encyclopedic thought, what is and is not registered as “reality.”¹² Moreover, as Mignolo suggests in his dictum that “the truth is...relative to the locus of enunciation,” in this it is possible for the privileges of the locus of enunciation to be encoded in its vision of totality as normative, neutral, rational, and objective.¹³

In Mignolo's work, the importance of this concept is that it makes visible in, for example, post-contact proto-encyclopedic texts, like Peter Martyr d'Anghiera's *De orbe novo decades* or Bernardino de Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* or Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas' *Historia de las Indias*, the beginnings of racism and colonization at the start of the Early Modern era—but his theoretical framework for critiquing encyclopedic thought also speaks suggestively to a comparative analysis of Bloom's fantasies of paradise and the periphery. Indeed, if Leopold the First is Bloom's fantasy of being the "highest constituted power in the land," we could speak of the "Messianic scene" as Bloom's fantasy of paradise as *becoming* the locus of enunciation and constructing reality's totality according to his desires—while at Bloom Cottage the fantasy is of being *fully commensurable with* the totality enunciated from the Imperial center. But, following Mignolo's lead, we can push the implications of this further: "Sure, all knowledges are constructed. But that is just the beginning. The question is: who, when, why is constructing knowledges?"¹⁴ In answering these questions, the way that the scenes' divergent endings—or "course[s] of action"—articulate a specific critique of the encyclopedic imagination becomes clear. Indeed, if the relationship with the locus of enunciation is the variable that distinguishes the scenes, it is also the driving force between, on the one hand, Leopold the First's pseudo-martyrdom, and, on the other, Bloom of Flowerville's cruelly optimistic installation as a nightly routine. Reading this time with the grain of the novel, Joyce's suggestion seems to be that the requirements of the encyclopedic imagination manufacture subjects' deference to the totality of the status quo—as if a taste of the responsibilities of the paradisiacal center is enough to reassure one of their position in the peripheral margin.

Since, in the new Bloomusalem, Leopold the First is the locus of enunciation, he manifests the normative principle against which everything else is measured and from which the shape of the totality of reality is defined and constructed. As such, from his "Court of Conscience," he assumes the prerogative to articulate a program for reform that make his desires normative, neutral, and

objective. This moment is vital, not just because it is the only point in the text in which Bloom actively states his vision for social and political reform, but because it provides the point at which his construction of a totality around himself fails, directly bringing about the scene's Messianic dénouement—and this failure seems to provide, for Bloom, an object lesson in the difficulties of reconstructing the world without the given totality of the status quo. Once the “Court of Conscience” has been opened, the trajectory of Leopold the First's vision for reform expands from the local to the universal, as he advises on taxation, chemistry, and the family—until he announces his universal principles:

I stand for the reform of municipal morals and the plain ten commandments. *New worlds for old.* Union of all, jew, moslem and gentile. [...] General amnesty, weekly carnival with masked licence, bonuses for all, esperanto the universal language with universal brotherhood. No more patriotism of barspongers and dropsical impostors. Free money, free rent, free love and a free lay church in a free lay state. (U 15.1685-93; emphasis added)

On this attempt to articulate a new world in place of that of the status quo—to imagine the way things could be, rather than the way they are in fin-de-siècle British-occupied Dublin—the fantasy begins to unravel. O'Madden Burke mocks it as “Free fox in a free henroost,” and, in a manner antithetical to the indulgent proliferation of details throughout the “Messianic scene,” Lenehan's question about “mixed bathing” is followed by stage directions outlining that “Bloom explains to those near him his schemes for social regeneration. All agree with him” (U 15.1695, 1701-3). This imaginative ellipsis, in which the details of his vision for universal reform are elided, is tremendously conspicuous: it is as if even from the privileged space of the locus of enunciation, he is insufficiently confident to articulate the specifics of his revolution; indeed, while Leopold the First's coronation devotes more than fifty lines to its spectators, it is significant that his opportunity to articulate his program for reform takes up merely a fraction of one.

This failure to think “New worlds for old” is followed by the appearance of:

a lorry on which are the shaking statues of several naked goddesses...and plaster figures, also naked, representing the new nine muses, Commerce, Operatic Music, Amor, Publicity, Manufacture, Liberty of Speech, Plural Voting, Gastronomy, Private Hygiene, Seaside Concert Entertainments, Painless Obstetrics and Astronomy for the People. (U 17.1704-10)

Recalling the Victorian fascination with muses, their sudden appearance as the new Bloomusalem's guiding lights suggests that Bloom requires the familiarity of the status quo's idea of the world in order to reassure himself that, in the absence of his ability to think completely free of its totality—to conceive of "New worlds for old"—his vision for reform would be guided by enlightened ideals. And in this, the miscount of the number of muses (nine instead of twelve) looks like Bloom's inability to retain control of the scale of a totality over which he is the defining principle. In a hallucination of himself at the paradisiacal center, totality is, for Bloom, unthinkable without the certainty provided by the totality of the status quo that he supposedly wants to overwrite. Accordingly, rather than imagining "New worlds for old," it seems that even in his hallucination of epistemic centrality all Bloom can achieve, besides a few sops to his private lusts, is imagination of the same totality in which he lives. Little surprise, then that the new Bloomusalem's "new world" begins with the exclusionary moves and universalizing pretensions later codified as Bloom of Flowerville's "rectitude": Leopold the First's authority establishes a form of "rectitude" centered on himself when he purges those who do not fit with his worldview—"The instantaneous deaths of many powerful enemies, graziers, members of parliament, members of standing committees"—and gives a performance of his universal inclusion of everyone else—by "shaking hands with a blind stripling...[eating] a raw turnip...[taking] part in a stomach race with elderly male and female cripples" (U 15.1566-8, 1600-15).

If the new Bloomusalem demonstrates that the great responsibilities of paradisiacal epistemological centrality are unsustainable for Bloom alone—that the requirement to totalize universal phenomena requires a level of certainty that he cannot reasonably profess—then the consequences of peripheral epistemological marginality seem understandably more benign. While

attempting to imagine totality sees Leopold the First fall, Bloom of Flowerville's subscription to and commensurability with the given totality of the status quo affords him a "course of action" that does not end so catastrophically—and in this, the given totality of the status quo seems enabling, in its stability and certainty as it progresses from "protasis" to "apodosis," and even progressive, in its potential to allow for his "schemes" (U 17.1744-5, 1709) of ever wider scope. Indeed, it is revealing that while Lenehan's question about "mixed bathing" triggers Leopold the First's imaginative failure and subsequent martyrdom, "establishments for mixed bathing" feature as just one of Bloom of Flowerville's many successful schemes: what for Leopold the First cannot be addressed with certainty is for Bloom of Flowerville reasonable within the status quo (U 17.1718). As such, the reference to Bloom Cottage's "oak sectional bookcase containing the Encyclopaedia Britannica" (U 17.1523) is highly conspicuous: if Bloom of Flowerville is figured as fully commensurable with the status quo's given totality, the *Britannica's* place in the fantasy's very beginning can be read as emblemizing that totality.¹⁵

Work on the encyclopedic imagination in *Ulysses* has tended not to address directly the *Britannica's* presence in Bloom's ideal home, focusing on either characterizing the encyclopedic qualities of *Ulysses* itself or on exploring Joyce's referential use of it when writing the novel.¹⁶ Paul K. Saint-Amour's recent study typifies this: although he notes that Bloom imagines it on his bookshelf, his reading of the novel's use of encyclopedic form "to model comprehensiveness without coherentism" does not attempt to account for Bloom of Flowerville's apparent proclivity to encyclopedism.¹⁷ This, I believe, is an oversight: just as the Bloom Cottage fantasy functions as a critique of capitalist aspiration, the reference to the *Britannica* at the beginning of the fantasy implicates it and its associated ideologies in that critique. The suggestion in the *Britannica's* appearance at the beginning of the digression is that it is fully implicated in Bloom's fantasy of rectitude in the periphery; indeed, as Mark Wollaeger has observed, one of the amusements of *Ulysses* is examining the "specific

ideological appeals” that underpin its characters’ “operations of desire,” and this is absolutely the case in the fact that Bloom of 7 Eccles Street foresees Bloom of Flowerville as a *Britannica*-owner.¹⁸

Len Platt’s genetic study of the *Wake*’s relationship with the 1911 Eleventh Edition of the *Britannica* remains the essential starting point for discerning Joyce’s relationship with the *Britannica*; indeed, in Platt’s stated aim to use the *Britannica* to “position Joyce the intellectual” and refine an idea of his “politics,” he provides a suggestive framework with which to approach *Ulysses*.¹⁹ In Platt’s reading, the *Wake* stands as a “very precise act of critical cultural sabotage” that undoes “the order, the structure, and, by implication, the whole epistemology” underlying the *Britannica*’s assumptions about itself and its project.²⁰ Taking the “Haveth Childers Everywhere” section as his key example, Platt notes that Joyce’s use of information from the *Britannica* is traceable in the *Notebooks*, but that the “ordering principle to their incorporation” is unfathomable—“there is no apparent explanation as to why notes appear where they do.”²¹ In this, he posits, undermining the encyclopedic principle seems to be in some sense central to the *Wake*’s “wider and foundational instincts,” as its performative dis-ordering of the *Britannica* exposes “in highly inventive ways the absurdities of culturally specific knowledge formation” that poses “as the universal.”²² As such, the humanistic and progressivist aspirations, stated clearly in the 1911 *Britannica*’s preface, come to look like a totalizing universalism in service of Anglo-American cultural imperialism. For the 1911 *Britannica*, the complexity of the world can be constructed as a single totality—but the validity of that construction depends on the assumption that its locus of enunciation is universal, rather than culturally specific. This renders unknowable all that knowledge that is incommensurable with it; indeed, Platt finds in the *Britannica*’s article on “Funeral Rites” a description of feasting as “an essential feature of every primitive funeral [that] in the Irish ‘wake’ still survives.”²³ In the *Britannica*’s order of things, the world and its knowledge is structured according to the prerogatives of its Anglo-American locus of enunciation, and made normative through its presentation as a neutral and objective universal truth.

From the *Wake*, we get a picture of Joyce interpreting the *Britannica* as representing a specific set of values, even as he harvested it for reference—values that do not seem far from the “rectitude” of *Britannica*-owning Bloom of Flowerville. Indeed, since Bloom of Flowerville’s idealness depends on his commensurability with a distant locus of enunciation, then it follows that he must be “Loyal” to its totalized idea of the world—with all the exclusions and universal pretensions it places on his own knowledge and agency. In this, the epistemological consequences of centrality in the new Bloomusalem and peripherality at Bloom Cottage can be usefully couched in terms of affect: if the great responsibilities of the totalizing imagination are unsustainable for Bloom, the *Britannica*-shaped totality to which he defers can work to console him by providing at once a carrot—in the form of a cruelly optimistic vision of his potential if he conforms—and a stick, by which Bloom is encouraged to fear that non-conformity, or holding on to the “incommensurable categorical intelligence situated in the cerebral convolutions,” would be “an aberration of the light of reason” that could lead to “homicide or suicide during sleep” (*U* 17.1765-8). If the paradise of the new Bloomusalem demonstrates to Bloom that he cannot think without the totality afforded by the status quo, the periphery of Bloom Cottage reassures him that the totality he already knows will do. In this, it begins to look like the effect of Leopold the First is to console Bloom of 7 Eccles Street that his fantasies, desires, and revolutionary ideas do not require any substantial changes to the status quo—as if the function of his dream of paradise is to reassure him that the certainty, security, and stability of the periphery is preferable. Only with the counterpoint these two fantasies offer each other does the extent of Bloom’s consolation by the status quo’s totalized idea of the world become quite so clear.

**Encyclopedism upon the Void:
Between Androcentrism and Gynocentrism**

In this, we are forced to ask what relationship *Ulysses* itself, as an apparently totalizing fiction, has with its critique of the encyclopedic imagination—and a provocative answer comes in examining how the Bloom Cottage fantasy sublimates Bloom’s apparent reformist zeal. While Leopold the First wants to enunciate “New worlds for old,” Bloom of Flowerville’s work as “resident magistrate or justice of the peace” does not in itself necessarily preclude reform—it just guarantees that any reform would be in line with a distant power. As such, the fantasy implicitly promises that Bloom’s desire for reform is already contained within and could one day be delivered by the status quo—as if the cruel optimism that shapes Bloom Cottage applies not only to the commodities and status it promises but to his political convictions. The way in which this is achieved is through the certainty, false or not, that the status quo’s totality is able to provide him. As Bloom explains to Stephen, in the moments leading up to the Bloom Cottage fantasy, although he has been recurrently frustrated in his desire to “amend many social conditions, the product of inequality and avarice and international animosity,” he still believed that “human life was infinitely perfectible”—but it would be “a task for a superior intelligence to substitute other more acceptable phenomena in the place of the less acceptable phenomena to be removed” (*U* 17.990-3, 1008-10). Bloom clearly has Stephen in mind as at least one potential “superior intelligence”—suggesting one sense in which Bloom believes that revolutionary potential may be immanent to the status quo. Yet Stephen’s response to Bloom’s deferral to his “superior intelligence” is revealing:

[Stephen] affirmed his significance as a conscious rational animal proceeding syllogistically from the known to the unknown and a conscious rational reagent between a micro and a macrocosm ineluctably constructed upon the incertitude of the void. (*U* 17.991, 1011-15)

In this, Stephen tries, using terms from “Proteus” and, ironically, his discourse on paternity in “Scylla and Charybdis,” to reassure Bloom that he himself can be confident that he has sufficient intelligence to “substitute other more acceptable phenomena in the place of the less acceptable phenomena to be removed.” Crucially, in this Stephen provides an image for totality: a shape constructed out of the uncertain void of reality. Stephen’s explicit suggestion is that Bloom should be confident that he can exist with the uncertainty of the unknown—that he can think in the absence of a given totality, or even navigate his way between multiple totalities.

Stephen’s confidence in the face of epistemological incertitude is surely one of the sources of Bloom’s optimism in deferring to him—but Bloom himself is described as apprehending Stephen’s comment “Substantially” rather than “verbally,” and being comforted by the fact that “as a competent keyless citizen he had proceeded energetically from the unknown to the known through the incertitude of the void” (*U* 17.1019-20). While Stephen endorses Bloom’s conscious movement “from the known to the unknown,” Bloom is comforted by the opposite interpretation: that they, as a pair of “competent keyless citizen[s],” have moved “from the unknown to the known.” If Stephen affirms that Bloom’s significance is as a “reagent...*upon* the incertitude of the void,” Bloom reassures himself by reflecting that they have both “proceeded energetically...*through* the incertitude of the void.” The differences here are stark: while Stephen insists Bloom is capable of existing beyond versions of reality “constructed upon the incertitude of the void,” Bloom is consoled by the idea that they both have rediscovered order, and escaped “the incertitude,” by passing “through...the void”—to the extent that later in the episode he conceives of himself as “a conscious reactor against the void of incertitude” (*U* 17.2210-1).

In this light, Bloom’s deference to “superior intelligence” in general, and to Stephen in particular, begins to look like a move to shut down epistemological uncertainty by embracing the assurances provided by the status quo’s order—and this brings us to the key issue underpinning the

potency of the Bloom Cottage fantasy. For Bloom, the status quo, as a “constructed” totality that seems to take its subjects “through the incertitude of the void,” rather than leaving them “upon” it, provides certainty: certainty that there is “superior intelligence” for which objectivity is possible, and thus certainty that loyalty to that “superior intelligence” will allow for objective judgement to be enunciated by those commensurable with it throughout the totality. This is to say, despite having heard Stephen’s theory of how all totalities are equally ineluctable constructions upon the void, Bloom finds comfort in the status quo’s assurances that he has passed through the void.

Nevertheless, even as Bloom misapprehends it, Stephen’s theory of reality proves the salient point for understanding the intervention in encyclopedic thought Joyce is making with *Ulysses*. If in the relationship between the new Bloomusalem and Bloom Cottage Joyce offers a critique of how power defines the encyclopedic imagination according to its predetermined totality, in Stephen’s insistence that Bloom think “upon the incertitude of the void” Joyce implicitly suggests that the weakness of the fantasies is their acceptance of reality *as* totality—as if the map of totality covered point for point the territory of reality. Why accept, Stephen’s theory asks, that reality is only that totality which is made visible by the parameters of the status quo? Why assume that totality necessarily accounts for the entirety of reality? Why not accept the uncertainty presented by the unknown, instead of denying its force upon reality? In this, we have the stakes of *Ulysses’* *fictional* encyclopedism: to think without the false confidence of totality—upon the incertitude of the void rather than through it. And in the aforementioned disruption that “Penelope” makes to the paradise-periphery dyad we begin to get a sense of what exactly thinking without totality means for Joyce.

Just as Odysseus’ return to order is contingent on Penelope’s maintenance of the matrimonial order, the order provided by women is an active component of Bloom’s fantasies for both paradise and the periphery. Indeed, if the epistemological consequences of Bloom’s fantasies for paradise and the periphery are mutually reinforcing, it is unsurprising to see that a linchpin of that mutual support

is a particular form of androcentrism. For all the differences engendered by the fantasies' visions of occupation of and commensurability with the locus of enunciation, the role of women is ultimately the same: to reassure Bloom that his masculinity affords him a default centrality of sorts. This is particularly clear in the new Bloomusalem, which is bookended by choruses of women heaping praise on Bloom. In the midst of his coronation, "Women whisper eagerly":

A MILLIONAIRESS
(*richly*) Isn't he simply wonderful?
A NOBLEWOMAN
(*nobly*) All that man has seen!
A FEMINIST
(*masculinely*) And done! (U 15.1460-66)

This apparently diverse array of admirable women is an essential element in the construction of Bloom's centrality—and his subsequent placing of "his right hand on his testicles," the same with which he later commands "Immediate silence" throughout his universal kingdom, when taking his oath clarifies that his masculinity is an active component of his epistemological centrality (U 15.1500). This privilege is reified even after Leopold the First's decline, in his diagnosis as "a finished example of the new womanly man" and the Daughters of Erin's litany (U 15.1798-9, 1940-52). Integral to the fantasy of the new Bloomusalem is women's active curation of Bloom's masculinity as central.

Ostensibly, the role of women in Bloom Cottage is far different; ultimately, it serves the same androcentric ends. Women are conspicuous by their complete absence from Bloom Cottage; as Austin Briggs has noted, "Bloom seems as solitary as Crusoe in his island," and so total is Molly's absence that it seems as if "a divorce might have already taken place"—indeed, among the catalogue of furnishings for the cottage, "no bed is inventoried."²⁴ That said, Molly does get one important mention: as part of Bloom's aforementioned vision of his maximum commensurability as "Mr and Mrs Leopold Bloom" (U 17.1614-5)—and it is as a type of incorporation into and containment within his identity that Bloom fantasizes women's reinforcement of his masculinity in Bloom Cottage; indeed, it is a vision of the incorporation he has been longing for since he sees Boylan's letter to "Mrs Marion

Bloom” in “Calypso” (*U* 4.244). A similar process is at work in the decision to name his estate “Flowerville”: just as he incorporates and contains Molly in his maximally commensurable title, in the name “Flowerville” he is able to incorporate and contain his philandering pseudonym, Henry Flower, sublimating his libido into the status quo’s public sphere.

Even though Bloom’s relationship to the locus of enunciation generates such wild differences between the new Bloomusalem and Bloom Cottage, in both fantasies that relationship reaffirms the normativity, neutrality, and objectivity of androcentrism nonetheless—both fantasies enunciate from androcentric loci. As such, one of the givens that the new Bloomusalem and Bloom Cottage fantasies jointly proffer is androcentrism as the foundation of both Bloom-shaped and *Britannica*-shaped totalities. Whether embodying the locus of enunciation at the center or being relative to it in the margins, both totalized visions converge in their implicit understanding that before they do anything else women afford men centrality. By thematizing this in both fantasies, Joyce suggests the extent to which gender is an active component in the creation of totalities. Androcentrism is, of course, implicit in the novel’s Homeric parallel; but if we accept his suggestion, in the paradise and the periphery dyad, that sex and gender is encoded in the heart of such myopic, totalizing visions, then in what way can *Ulysses* itself imagine a micro and a macrocosm “upon the incertitude of the void” without falling into a similar androcentrism?

Joyce gives us his answer in “Penelope,” which, when read alongside the “Messianic scene,” conspicuously undermines the affective control that the paradise-periphery dyad exerts on Bloom by neatly figuring fiction’s capacity to imagine without totality. As noted, paradise reassures Bloom of his place in the periphery as much through his fear of an “aberration of the light of reason” that will lead to “homicide or suicide during sleep” as by the pressure of imagining a coherent totality. Indeed, just as the new Bloomusalem provides a vision of Bloom’s reformism were he the epistemic center, it also provides a grotesque moment in which that very “aberration” is portrayed as fundamental to Leopold

the First's authority. In the moments following his failure to imagine the details of his reforms, when people start to throw abuse his way, women, led by a "Veiled Sibyl," rush to defend him:

THE VEILED SIBYL

(enthusiastically) I'm a Bloomite and I glory in it. I believe in him in spite of all. I'd give my life for him, the funniest man on earth.

[...]

(stabs herself) My hero god! *(she dies)*

(Many most attractive and enthusiastic women also commit suicide by stabbing, drowning, drinking prussic acid, aconite, arsenic, opening their veins, refusing food, casting themselves under steamrollers, from the top of Nelson's Pillar, into the great vat of Guinness's brewery, asphyxiating themselves by placing their heads in gasovens, hanging themselves in stylish garters, leaping from windows of different storeys.) (U 15.1735-51)

This voluntary femicide in Leopold the First's honor suggests that androcentrism may ultimately be exactly that which Bloom fears most. Preferable to the epistemic center is the periphery, where the androcentric ideal need not be so extreme—at Bloom Cottage, women are simply compartmentalized into invisibility. But if Bloom's fantasies of androcentric totality require acts of exclusion that manifest in an honorary femicide in the new Bloomusalem and Molly's invisibility at Bloom Cottage, "Penelope" offers up a grotesque and triumphant joke as a final coda. When Molly thinks to herself that she would "rather die 20 times over than marry another of their sex" (U 18.231-2), she appears to offer succor to Bloom's desire for patriarchal centrality. But the parallel that this moment draws with the honorary femicide gives the line a rather different weight: the suggestion is not that Molly would die for Bloom, but that she would die twenty times and still retain her agency to choose who to marry. Against Bloom's fantasies, "Penelope" approximates women's agency (or Joyce's interpretation of it), and asserts that it will never be fully comprehensible or identifiable within a totalizing androcentric order.²⁵ By using "Penelope" to imagine a gynocentric locus of enunciation in contradistinction to Bloom's paradisiac and peripheral ideal selves, Joyce affirms that *Ulysses'* encyclopedism is an attempt to use fiction to generate an idea of the world without totality; and, in so doing he insists that if encyclopedic thought is to sidestep the pitfalls of totalizing thought, it needs to work *with* fictional thought, not to return us to the known but to bring us to see the unknown—to re-place us upon the void.

Notes

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¹ Michael Groden, *Ulysses in Progress* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 7–8.

² Groden, *Ulysses in Progress*, 173.

³ Although Joyce wrote to Harriet Shaw Weaver, on 20 December 1920, “‘Circe’ finished this morning at last” (*Letters III*, 34), the extent to which he fully believed this to be true is debatable, particularly given the rigor with which he added material after this date. That said, since the key features of the episode were in place by this date, and since he began work on “Ithaca” and “Penelope” immediately after, it makes sense to take the letter as the dating an initial “full draft” of “Circe.”

⁴ Groden, *Ulysses in Progress*, 52–3, 218.

⁵ Since Joyce goes on to say that “Everyone says *he* ought to have died long ago” (*Letters I*, 168), it could be argued that Joyce only has in mind Leopold Bloom and his iterations, rather than the whole Bloom family.

⁶ Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 1.

⁷ Besides the phrase “new Bloomusalem,” the Citizen himself makes two appearances in the scene, and Bloom’s statement of principles echoes the Citizen’s dig about “universal love” (U 17.1616–18, 1932–3, 1684–93; 12.1489).

⁸ Mark Wollaeger’s essay on Bloom’s “coronation” remains the key reading of how Joyce synthesizes different authorities into the fantasy—although while he focuses on solely the regal and papal elements, professional (as “chairman”) and juridical (at the “Court of Conscience”) aspects are also conflated (U 15.1471, 1629). Mark A. Wollaeger, “Reading Ulysses: Agency, Ideology, and the Novel,” in *Joyce and the Subject of History*, ed. Mark A. Wollaeger, Victor Luftig, and Robert E. Spoo (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

⁹ Richard E. Madtes, “Joyce and the Building of Ithaca,” *ELH* 31, no. 4 (December 1, 1964): 447. Although the phrase “sectional bookcase” is in the notes, it does not show up in the drafts of the episode until Typing Stage 2 (JJA 16).

¹⁰ My reading here may appear to diverge with that of Paul K. Saint-Amour’s recent study of *Ulysses*’ encyclopaedisms: while Saint-Amour suggests that understanding the text by way of a “center-periphery dyad” masks the “growing resemblances between metropolitan and colonial spaces” that are revealed by *Ulysses*’ Diderotian “untimeliness,” my reading takes that same “center-periphery” dyad as the starting point for *Ulysses*’ critique of encyclopedism. I would contend, however, that our arguments are not exclusive of each other—are mutually supportive, even. While Saint-Amour focuses his attention on how Joyce uses encyclopedic form by heeding the proleptic or prophetic “temporal directive” Diderot builds into the *Encyclopédie*, my argument works from the critique of the encyclopedic imagination immanent to *Ulysses* itself—a critique that focuses, as I will discuss, on the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*’s rather particular “brand” of encyclopedic thought. Although both of our arguments hinge on Joyce’s rejection of the “lust for totalizing representations,” Saint-Amour’s study addresses specifically total war discourse, while mine addresses the encyclopedism of the *Britannica*. Paul K. Saint-Amour, *Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 227–8.

¹¹ Mignolo derives this term from Michel Foucault’s “modalités d’enonciation” in *L’archéologie du savoir*. Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 5; Michel Foucault, *L’archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969), 72.

¹² Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 171–216.

¹³ Mignolo, *Darker Side*, 186.

¹⁴ Walter D. Mignolo, “Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, no. 7–8 (2009): 2.

¹⁵ The *Britannica* itself was added to the sectional bookcase at Typing Stage 3 (JJA 16).

¹⁶ Besides Saint-Amour, significant readings explicitly focused on encyclopedism in *Ulysses* include: Cheryl Herr, “Art and Life, Nature and Culture,” in *Joyce’s Ulysses: The Larger Perspective*, ed. Robert D. Newman and Weldon Thornton (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1987); Hilary Clark, *The Fictional Encyclopaedia: Joyce, Pound, Sollers* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990); Franco Moretti, “Ulysses and the Twentieth Century,” in *Modern Epic: The World-System from Goethe to García Márquez*, trans. Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1996); Jed Rasula, “Textual Indigence in the Archive,” *Postmodern Culture* 9, no. 3 (1999); Patricia Novillo-Corvalán, “Transnational Modernist Encounters: Joyce, Borges, Bolaño, and the Dialectics of Expansion and Compression,” *The Modern Language Review* 108, no. 2 (April 1, 2013): 341–67; Cólín Parsons,

The Ordnance Survey and Modern Irish Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Work in the latter category is far sparser, owing to the *Britannica*'s relative absence from Budgen's, Gilbert's, and Ellmann's records of *Ulysses*' genesis. Katherine Ebury's recent study of Joycean 'cosmologies,' however, makes a convincing case for its use in the making of 'Ithaca.' Katherine Ebury, *Modernism and Cosmology: Absurd Lights* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 66–8.

¹⁷ Saint-Amour, *Tense Future*, 199n27, 225.

¹⁸ Wollaeger, "Reading Ulysses: Agency, Ideology, and the Novel," 92.

¹⁹ Len Platt, "'Unfallable Encyclicling': Finnegans Wake and the Encyclopedia Britannica," *James Joyce Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (2009): 112.

²⁰ Platt, "'Unfallable Encyclicling'," 111–2.

²¹ Platt, "'Unfallable Encyclicling'," 111.

²² Platt, "'Unfallable Encyclicling'," 116, 112.

²³ Platt, "'Unfallable Encyclicling'," 114; "Funeral Rites," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (U.S.A.: Encyclopaedia Britannica Company, 1911), 331c.

²⁴ Austin Briggs, "Bloom's Dream Cottage and Crusoe's Island: Man Caves," in *A Long the Krommerun: Selected Papers from the James Joyce Utrecht Symposium*, ed. Onno Kusters, Tim Conley, and Peter de Voogd (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2016), 70.

²⁵ Indeed, with this framework we can begin to see why two particular entries on women, which Madtes describes as 'unused,' show up Joyce's notes for 'Ithaca': 'Gynecocracy coming' and 'God a woman.' Madtes, "Joyce and the Building of Ithaca," 450.